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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY

Hungary

SUBJECT

Working Conditions at Ajka Bauxite Mines

25X1

DATE DISTR. 24 Nov 1953

NO. OF PAGES 2

NO. OF ENCLS.

SUPP. TO
REPORT NO.

25X1

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. The present official name of the Szombathely High Construction State Enterprise is No. 72/2 Construction Trust. Two major sections of this trust have been working at Ajka since March 1952. One section is employed at the bauxite mines, the other in the construction of workmen's housing settlement, not because the authorities are very much concerned about the social welfare of their miners, but only because the increasing number of miners employed in the mines had to be housed somewhere. Besides the whole housing prospect will presumably not be ready for about six years.
2. All bauxite mines and aluminum plants, are in Soviet hands and the manager and section chiefs are all Soviets.. The mines and the plants operate day and night in three shifts, exclusively for the Soviets.. Not only aluminum, but the better quality bauxite ore is being shipped by the Soviets by railway. It is rumored that it goes to the USSR, while others have it that it goes mainly to Czechoslovakia, and the rest to Hungarian plants.
3. The majority of the bauxite mines are in the vicinity of Halimba and Felixbanya villages. Bauxite ore with the richest aluminum content has allegedly been found at Felixbanya, it has, however, not been prospected yet. There have been many acts of sabotage lately at this enterprise, the perpetrators of which could not be traced. In one of the mines there is a constant leakage of water, and production can only continue if this water is constantly pumped out. This pump is manned by a single person, who stops the pump pretty often at night, thus a considerable amount of water gets into the mine. The night shift then has to wait sometimes half the

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night till the water is pumped out. The pump operator is a key man who is on duty for 16 hours a day; until now it has not been proven that he sabotaged purposely.

4. The Soviet management has not been contented with the production at the plant and the mines. Therefore, at the beginning of 1953 they exchanged the above mentioned Szombathely High Construction State Enterprise with the Russian "Danube Valley Construction Enterprise" Company. The exchange was carried out very simply: one afternoon the Hungarian manager of the Szombathely concern walked all over the plant and mines, and informed everybody that as of the next day the Soviets would manage the whole plant and mines. Everybody had to remain at his own post. No notices were accepted. The workmen got scared, knowing that under the Soviets working conditions would be even worse, and the "foreign" workers would have to work under stricter discipline; besides, the name of the "Danube Valley Construction Enterprise" has a bad name all over the country. The Soviets make them work in three shifts, without granting any overtime or bonuses for the night shift. There is a roll call every day, and if a person is missing for the second time he is fetched by the police. The culprit is then taken in handcuffs to court, where he is sentenced to six to eight months prison for one or two days absence from work. Every absence is qualified as "sabotage".
5. The Soviets took over even the female cooks of the plant, who did not want to remain, since the Soviets paid only 260 forints per month, whereas under the Hungarian management they received 700 forints monthly. All had to remain.

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